

The Merchant of Venice” is a 16th-century play written by William Shakespeare, in which the Venetian merchant named Antonio failed to pay a massive loan from the Jewish moneylender, Shylock. Although in this play Antonio is the main character, the audience is drawn to Shylock who sues Antonio and Portia, the rich heiress who marries Antonio’s friend Bassanio and saves Antonio’s life in a dramatic court scene. Antonio is a wealthy merchant of Venice. He is a respected and popular man. Among his many friends is a young man named Bassanio who wants to marry a woman called Portia from Belmont, but he can’t afford to pay for his clothes and travel to Belmont. He goes to his friend Antonio and asks him if he can borrow some money from him. Antonio has no money to lend his friend, so he approaches Shylock, a Jew, a harsh moneylender. He had cooked revenge against him for which he was always looking for the opportunity. Antonio's attitude and treatment of Shylock is one of the sources of Shylock's resentment of Antonio and his friends. He even insults Shylock directly because of his racism and his disagreement with Shylock's business practices. However, racist treatment is merely the surface of Shylock's dislike. Although Shylock's racism does affect his impression of Antonio, it is clear that Shylock is more concerned with Antonio's effect on his business. This is consistent with his reaction to events later on in the play. Shylock's resentment of Antonio's business dealings and religion lead him to thoughts of revenge in this scene, before the means of revenge have even appeared. Shylock made Antonio sign a bond that if he failed to repay the money on a certain day he would have to forfeit a pound of flesh. Luck went Shylock’s way. Antonio failed to repay the money. Shylock took the case to the duke of the Venice claiming for the penalty. The enemies next met in the court. To feed his greed, Shylock sharpening his knife much to the dismay of Antonio. He was impatient to see Antonio dying at his feet, but this could not happen. The counsellor turned the table against Shylock by saying that Shylock could cut his pound of flesh from Antonio’s breast, but he must not shed even a single drop of Antonio’s blood. This sabotaged the conspiracy of Shylock, for it was impossible for him to cut the flesh without shedding some blood. Shylock, after this, suffered another setback when the young counsellor charge-sheeted for plotting against the life of a Christian and a citizen of Venice. He demanded death sentence for Shylock besides this he demanded that his whole property be seized. Thus, the cruel merchant met a dreadful end. Shylock agrees to lend the money on a strange condition that if Antonio doesn’t pay it back by a certain period of time, he will lose a pound of flesh, which Antonio agrees. Bassanio arrives at Portia’s estate, and they declare love for one another. Meanwhile, all of Antonio’s ships appear to be lost. Shylock then insists on his pound of flesh. He wants it from Antonio’s heart which means Antonio would die. Shylock moves to the court to plead before the Duke. There, Portia and her maid Nerissa come disguised as a male lawyer and a male clerk respectively. Portia insists that Shylock can take Antonio’s flesh but must not spill even a drop of his blood or he would lose his own life, a sentence the Duke supports. Thus, Shylock is humiliated and defeated. Bassanio returns to Belmont where Portia reveals that she was the lawyer in disguise. Antonio receives the positive news that his .ships made safely back to Venice